

CLAIMS:

1. Method of providing contour information related to images, comprising the steps of:
 - obtaining a set of interrelated images (I_1, I_2, I_3), (step 26),
 - segmenting said images, (step 28),
 - 5 extracting at least two contours (10, 12, 14) from the segmentation, (step 30)
 - selecting interest points ($J_1 - J_{12}$) on at least some of the contours, (step 32),
 - associating, for said extracted contours, interest points (J) with corresponding reconstructed points by means of three-dimensional reconstruction, (step 34),
 - projecting the reconstructed points ($P_1 - P_{12}$) into each image, (step 36), and
 - 10 linking, for each image, reconstructed points that are not projected at a junction point between different contours or their projections to each other in order to provide a first set of links, (step 38), such that at least a reasonable part of a contour of an object can be determined based on the linked points.
- 15 2. Method according to claim 1, wherein the step of linking in the first set of links comprises only providing links between reconstructed points or their projections associated with the same contour.
3. Method according to claim 1, where the interest points comprise junction
20 points (J), where a junction point is provided at a location where two contours border each other.
4. Method according to claim 1, further comprising the step of combining, for a contour, the links in the first set of links provided in relation to each image for obtaining at
25 least a reasonable part of a complete contour of an object (step 40).
5. Method according to claim 4, wherein the step of combining comprises only combining the links to points that have less than three links.

6. Method according to claim 5, further comprising the step of discarding, for each image, at least some of those reconstructed points or their projections to which links are provided from more than two other reconstructed points or their projections.
- 5 7. Method according to claim 1, wherein the step of linking comprises linking, for each image, reconstructed points that are projected at a junction or their projections to reconstructed points or their projections in a second set of links.
8. Method according to claim 1, wherein the reconstructed points that are
10 projected at a junction in a majority of the images or their projections are linked in the first set of links.
9. Method according to claim 1, wherein the reconstructed points are provided in
15 a three dimensional space.
10. Method according to claim 1, wherein the images are provided in a two dimensional space.
11. Method according to claim 1, further comprising the step of determining the
20 actual motion of contours from image to image before projecting reconstructed points into an image.
12. Method according to claim 4, further comprising the step of coding the
25 images, (step 42), where the information about the linked reconstructed points is used in the coding.
13. Apparatus (16) for providing contour information related to images,
comprising:
an image obtaining unit (18) arranged to obtain a set of interrelated images, and
30 an image segmenting unit (20) arranged to segment said images, and
a contour determining unit (22) arranged to:
extract at least two contours from the segmentation made by the segmentation unit,
select interest points on the contours of each image,

associate, for each extracted contour, interest points with corresponding reconstructed points by means of three-dimensional reconstruction,
project the reconstructed points into each image, and
link, for each image, reconstructed points that are not projected at a junction between
5 different contours or their projections to each other in order to provide a first set of
links, such that at least a reasonable part of a contour of an object can be determined
based on the linked points.

14. Computer program product (44) for providing contour information related to
10 images, comprising a computer readable medium having thereon:
computer program code means, to make the computer, when said program is loaded in the
computer:
obtain a set of interrelated images,
segment said images,
15 extract at least two contours from the segmentation,
select interest points on at least some of the contours,
associate, for said extracted contours, interest points (J) with corresponding
reconstructed points by means of three-dimensional reconstruction,
project the reconstructed points into each image, and
20 link, for each image, reconstructed points that are not projected at a junction point
between different contours to each other or their projections in order to provide a first
set of links, such that at least a reasonable part of a contour of an object can be
determined based on the linked points.